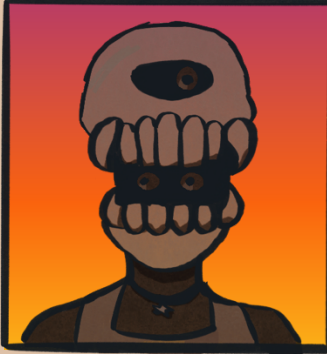


## CHARACTERS

## OUR NARRATOR

Drawn to the italicized omniscient. Reads stage directions.



## XIOLOTL

/ ʃyoʊ-lɔʔ /

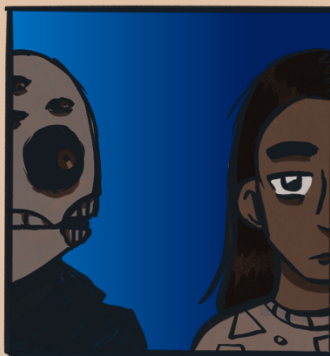
*An entity of Tlamiz from, a tlan not bound by time, outside the realm of living earth. Tells the story of “how I got this suffix”. (They/She)*



## XIO

/ ʃyo /

*Close to celebrating their eighteenth birthday. Wishes she could just be as she is and/or sing away life’s troubles. Human. (She/They)*



## SOL (SOLOTL)

/soʊl /

/ soʊ-lɔʔ /

*The sole guide for the dead that is accustomed to sudden responsibility. Travels between Tlamiz and the tlan of life, where they are returning to be Xio’s mentor.*

*(They/Them)*

**sunset punch**

*To the side, and the center of attention, is the humanoid figure of XIOLOTL. They are hidden within a wide pink poncho, held by golden light from above. Their face is carefully shadow obscured...*

*...until their first words to the audience.*

XIOLOTL:

blessed mortals and dearest homies,  
*this is a story of memories,*  
 of a life i knew long ago.  
 before my name met its suffix,  
 when i lived, *as you all do now,*  
 in this realm of *time* and living earth.

*Behind XIOLOTL is a screen, one that brings the audience a vision of illuscripts. This first illuscript gradually bathes this realm/the stage in pink light.*

XIOLOTL:

it may be a case of vanity,  
*me wanting to tell y'all everything*  
 or maybe i want these moments to *live as one in your mind.*  
 either way, i can only tell you this story outta order,  
*that is to say*  
 “as i remember it...”

*In the illuscript, XIO and SOL are statue and silhouette. As the golden light of XIOLOTL fades slightly into the pink light of a sunset, old-school cumbia beings to play quietly in the background. Joining the song is a chorus of cicadas, with their relentless chirring hum.*

*XIO and SOL are brought into motion—acting out a memory—while XIO narrates through XIOLOTL. XIOLOTL speaks a bit higher and more quickly now, as this is the voice of XIO.*

XIO:

me and sol were outside, right? sitting on the steps just outside my front door,  
sol with their box of chalks  
and me ‘cuz i heard the song of summer snacks,

XIO, IN THE MEMORY (to SOL):

paletero time, baby!

XIO:

i wanted a tamarindo paleta and some chicharrónes.

i *know* that’s not technically dinner, ok?

listen.

liiiisten.

it was *basically* sunset, stores closing y’know, and i was hungry.

*no*, there wasn’t any food in the house. it wouldn’t last anyway.

ever since the fridge turned into an oven-wannabe

and fungi claimed the cabinets,

the house hadn’t seen a snack beyond a puddle or a mold fest.

*sol* might not have minded—with how they didn’t need to eat and all—but *i* did.

for how much longer that’d be true, i wasn’t sure, since sol said

eventually *i* wouldn’t even be *feeling* very ‘*alive*’.

hah.

yeah, that sounds as good as you think it does.

*The old-school cumbia from somewhere nearby reaches an end.*

XIO:

i was halfway done with my snacks,

sol was still drawing cryptic glyphs

as the lights lowered behind the houses.

*Xoloitzcuintle dogs snuffle and yip in the distance. Their sounds gradually quiet, except for one dog that appears to be nearing closer to XIO and SOL.*

XIO:

stray dogs retreated into the shade for rest,  
the sidewalk free of folks and their shadows as the sun set.

*A lone katydid calls out in chirps and scratches.*

XIO:

everyone cozy in their houses with their families and their functional ac units.  
soon as the streetlights shuddered themselves awake,  
we were gonna head inside.  
i had just turned to sol, asking what this one drawing meant,

*XIO lets the final word resound harshly through two tough syllables.*

XIO:

when this punk greets us by calling me *bruja*.  
very inconsiderate, really. legit witches know what they're doing.  
what exactly did she think she knew about me?

i wondered that  
and then i realized i couldn't really see her.  
she seemed to waver in space  
as if my eyes were full of tears,  
but i could hear her speak so clearly.

how did i not recognize my own voice?

i'm about to ignore the rest of her nasty dialogue, like sol is,  
but then she turns away from me.  
*freak.*

*Closer than before comes the howl of a Xoloitzcuintli.*

XIO:  
she calls sol that. likely meant as an introduction  
to more stupidity she doesn't get to continue.  
she doesn't get another word out...because i socked 'er.

*There is the rattling of plastic bracelets as XIOLOTL mimes a quick but fierce punch.*

XIO:  
im sure she thanked her lucky little stars i wasn't wearing my jewelry that day.  
was it *really, truly fortunate* though for her to miss the chance  
of having a big brass mood ring as a permanent statement piece?  
at least she could brag about a new bruise tattoo.

*The annoyance in XIO's voice is nudged away as XIOLOTL gives a sheepish shrug.*

XIO:  
the details get a bit flimsy here. i dunno exactly what happened to the dude.  
one second she was reeling backwards, the next she was gone.  
i wasn't paying attention to anything  
other than how i hadn't punched anyone before.  
for a moment i thought the jerk probably had decided that was enough pain for one  
evening and ran off.  
when i asked sol though,  
they said a little stray dog

—the kind that love to chase bicycles—  
made that metiche run away.

*XIO imitates the little stray XOLOITZCUINTLE dog, who speaks as though it were a small cholo. Wisdom is evident in its patient drawl.*

XOLOITZCUINTLE:  
no excuse for that jerk,

XIO:  
—the dog apparently said—

XOLOITZCUINTLE:  
she'd spit on my kin if she could. 'n she insulted y'all  
with pure, misguided disrespect.

*The XOLOITZCUINTLE lets out a short huff.*

XIO:  
though i hadn't heard that said, it seemed strange enough to believe.

*XIO's voice gets a tad higher with embarrassed defensiveness.*

XIO:  
speaking of believe,  
i told sol and now i'm telling you,  
i wasn't gonna start punching people after that, ok?  
*that was that...*

especially 'cuz i had to start figuring out what to do about the whole dying thing.  
*XIOLOTL, as XIO, stands in their golden light. In the illuscript, XIO and SOL climb up the steps that lead into the house. Sunset's gold and pink lights are all that remain for a moment until they exit as well. Fade into void.*